



NEWS RELEASE

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Utah Receives National Recognition for Most Improved Infant Immunization Levels

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) officially released today immunization data showing significant improvements in Utah’s percentage of adequately protected children. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) received a CDC award earlier this year as the “Most Improved State” in the nation for two-year-old child immunization levels.

State immunization levels increased 8.5 percent since 1999 for the basic series of shots for two-year-old children, placing Utah above the national average (74.8%) at 75.7 percent. The successful immunization efforts moved Utah ahead of 22 other states. Previous rankings placed Utah at 66 percent or third from the bottom.

“Utah has made significant improvements increasing infant immunization levels since 1999,” says Mrs. Leavitt. The First Lady credits several reasons for Utah’s improvement, including reminder cards from health care providers, greater access to immunizations throughout the state, and the growth of the Utah Statewide Immunization Information System (USIIS), a computerized information system that maintains immunization records. USIIS has more than one million patient records representing over 83 percent of all Utah children up to six years of age who have two or more immunization records.

“Although disease levels are at all-time lows and immunization levels are higher than ever before, the potential for outbreaks still exists,” says Scott D. Williams, UDOH Deputy Director. As recent as 1999, Utah reported approximately 300 cases of pertussis.

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“We cannot rest upon our accomplishments,” says Williams. “The immunization effort never stops. Many Utah children are still not adequately immunized and each month about 4,000 more babies are born that we must protect. We must keep our sight on the goal to immunize every child by two.”

Vaccines are one of the greatest achievements of science and public health. Prior to the development of vaccines, many childhood diseases occurred in epidemic proportions. Although outbreaks still occur, most vaccine-preventable diseases have been dramatically reduced by 99 percent or more since the introduction of vaccines.

For more information on immunizations, call your health care provider, local health department or the Utah Immunization Hotline at 1-800-275-0659.

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